

Washington, D.C. – Congresswoman Betty McCollum (MN-4) stood on the side of Minnesota's workers and supported the Emergency Extended Unemployment Compensation Act (H.R.5749), which will provide up to 13 weeks of extended unemployment benefits to workers who have lost their jobs as a result of an economy on the brink of recession. While extending these benefits is one of the most cost-effective and fast-acting ways to stimulate the economy, the Bush Administration and Congressional Republicans opposed the legislation, which was passed in the House.

“An extension of unemployment benefits is critical for Minnesota families struggling to deal with increased gas and food prices, while searching for a new job,” McCollum said. “Given the surge in the nation's unemployment rate, passing this legislation would provide much needed help to 3.8 million Americans – including 70,000 Minnesota families.”

The economy has lost nearly 325,000 jobs this year and 8.5 million Americans are unemployed. The latest Labor Department report showed a 5 percent increase in unemployment from April 2008 to May 2008 – the biggest one-month increase in unemployment in 20 years.

“As Minnesotans and Americans across the country feel the brunt of the rising costs of living, we need a comprehensive and long-term approach to restore the strength of our economy, address health care costs and invest in education and training to prepare our workers to compete in the global economy,” McCollum added.

Congresswoman McCollum voted for the bill that enacted an economic stimulus plan in the form of tax rebate checks and for several measures to begin to address gas prices. She also supported legislation to help homeowners avoid foreclosure and a federal budget that would reinvest in Americans.

Congresswoman Betty McCollum (MN-4) serves on the House Appropriations Committee and the Oversight and Government Reform Committee.